

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03
INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 10925

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD EG
SUBJECT: ARAB BOYCOTT: REPRESENTATIONS RE U.S. ANTI-BOYCOTT
LEGISLATION

REF: (A) STATE 142390, (B) CAIRO 10749, (C) ALEXANDRIA 540

1. AS PART OF OUR CONTINUING EFFORT TO PUT NEW ANTI-BOYCOTT
LEGISLATION IN CORRECT PERSPECTIVE, AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY
BRIEFED FAHMY ON THE SUBJECT. (SINCE FAHMY HAS BEEN IN
ALEXANDRIA PAST TWO WEEKS, IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE DO SO EARLIER.)
AMBASSADOR STRESSED NON-HOSTILE PURPOSE OF NEW LEGISLATION
AND FACT THAT ITS PRINCIPAL PURPOSE IS TO PROTECT AMERICAN
FIRMS FROM UNWARRANTED ARAB INTRUSIONS INTO THEIR BUSINESS
AFFAIRS. IN DOING SO, HE NOTED GENERALLY POSITIVE APPROACH
OF GOE TO BOYCOTT PROBLEMS AND URGED THAT THESE CONTINUE.

2. FAHMY KNEW ABOUT NEW LEGISLATION AND HAD LITTLE TO SAY
ABOUT IT. HE COMMENTED THAT TIMING IS UNFORTUNATE IN TERMS
OF ME PEACE PROCESS AND THAT NEW LEGISLATION FOCUSES MORE
ATTENTION ON ARAB BOYCOTT THAN IS DESIRABLE. AL BOYCOTT
COMMISSIONER MAHGOUB AND RADICAL ARAB STATES, SUCH AS LIBYA
AND IRAQ, HAVE SIEZED UPON NEW LEGISLATION TO TRY TO
PROVOKE A CONFRONTATION. THIS CLEARLY UNDESIRABLE AND GOE
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WILL NOT PLAY THEIR GAME. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD KNOW
THAT THE NEW LEGISLATION MAY CAUSE ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS
FOR GOE IN TRYING TO GET FORD, COCA COLA AND OTHER
BOYCOTTED FIRMS OFF THE BOYCOTT LIST. ANY EFFORT BY
GOE TO PRESS FOR REMOVAL OF AMERICAN FIRMS NOW WILL BE
CASTIGATED BY RADICAL ARABS AS CAPITULATION TO USG
PRESSURE. GOE WILL NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS

TO ALLOW FORD AND OTHER BOYCOTTED AMERICAN FIRMS TO
RESUME OPERATIONS IN EGYPT IN THE BELIEF THAT OTHER
LIKE-MINDED ARAB STATES WILL TAKE THEIR CUE FROM
EGYPTIAN PRACTICE.

3. FAHMY NOTED THAT GOE HAS FOR LONG TIME BEEN LAX ON
ENFORCING BOYCOTT. GOE, HE NOTED, ACTS PRAGMATICALLY
ON THE BASIS OF ITS OWN INTERESTS. THUS, POSITIVE
CERTIFICATION POSES NO PROBLEM FOR GOE AND HAS BEEN
WIDELY USED HERE. HE ADVISED, HOWEVER, THAT WE AVOID
BRANDISHING NEW BOYCOTT LEGISLATION SINCE DOING SO WILL
SIMPLY AGGRAVATE THE ISSUE. I TOLD HIM WE HAVE NO
INTENTION OF BRANDISHING IT, BUT WANT OUR ARAB FRIENDS
TO KNOW WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE NEW LEGISLATION SO THAT
THEY WILL UNDERSTAND ITS PURPOSE AND NON-CONFRONTA-
TIONAL NATURE.
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